

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF BEACH BLANKET BABYLON

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the world's longest running musical revue that is politically incorrect, brilliant and hilarious. Beach Blanket Babylon has drawn sold-out audiences in its hometown San Francisco for 40 years and isn't showing any signs of slowing down or getting old. The New York Times is right to call Beach Blanket Babylon "no less a part of San Francisco than the Golden Gate Bridge or Coit Tower."

Every performance of Beach Blanket Babylon takes the audience on a fast-paced journey around the world with Snow White on her search for Prince Charming. She encounters an always-changing cast of characters from politics and pop culture. Everybody who is anybody has been on stage: President Barack Obama, the Queen of England, Lady Gaga, Tina Turner, Prince, Hillary Clinton, Justin Bieber, Elvis and da Mayor Willie Brown have all endured sarcastic interpretations of current events.

I fell in love with the show the first time I saw it, in part, of course, because of the outrageous hats. These creations range from a giant heart made of red curls to the Skyline of San Francisco with a growing Transamerica Pyramid to a five tier wedding cake. Balancing those heavy and top-heavy sculptures is no easy task for the performers. They wear braces on their hips and shoulders to distribute the weight. The mechanical hats are so heavy that they are attached to stands that roll on the stage and are hidden in the costumes of the performers.

I was told by a secret source that auditions for Beach Blanket Babylon are "the craziest thing ever." They start out innocent enough: sing a song, say for example Stand by Your Man. Next thing you know, you'll be asked to sing it with a French bulldog accent or the personality of the Wicked Witch from the Wizard of Oz.

The late Steve Silver, with his sense for the absurd and whimsical imagination, was the genius who gave birth to Beach Blanket Babylon in 1974. The show grew out of street performances in North Beach, the famous Italian neighborhood of San Francisco. Since Silver's passing in 1995, his widow Jo Schuman Silver has produced the show and continued his vision and legacy.

In 1983, Beach Blanket Babylon did a command performance for the Queen of England and Prince Phillip at Davies Symphony Hall. In 1988, the de Young Museum presented an exhibition of 15 years of Beach Blanket Babylon hats and costumes. On the 20th anniversary, BBB performed at the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House and today, on the 40th anniversary, BBB is giving a special performance at San Francisco City Hall featuring current Mayor Ed Lee, former Mayor Willie Brown, former Secretary of State George Schultz and his wife Charlotte Schultz as Wonder Woman.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to honor the 40th anniversary of Beach Blanket Babylon, a San

Francisco institution that has sharpened the minds and provided hearty belly laughs for over 6 million fans during 15,000 performances. I have enjoyed the show more than a dozen times and will continue to be a regular at this unique San Francisco theater experience. May it last for at least another 40 years!

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOS BANOS DIVINO ESPIRITO SANTO

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Los Banos Portuguese Divino Espírito Santo (Los Banos Portuguese DES) organization on their 100th anniversary.

The story of the Los Banos Portuguese DES Association began more than 700 years ago with the birth of a royal princess. Queen Saint Isabel was born in Aragon, Spain, in 1271. According to legend, a famine seized Portugal in 1292, and she donated generously to her people. Moved by the example of their queen, the Portuguese nobles asked permission to create a festival in honor of these generous acts. Every year on Pentecost Sunday, the Portuguese people collect donations to feed the community. The festa made its way from Western Europe to the Azores and eventually the United States on the proverbial backs of Portuguese Azorean immigrants. The festa is still celebrated today.

In 1904, Azorean Portuguese immigrants founded the Los Banos chapter of the organization which honors Queen Saint Isabel's example—the Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo 64. The organization was incorporated and later changed its name to Los Banos Portuguese DES Association. The Los Banos Portuguese DES Festa was incorporated in 1914. The festa was originally celebrated in a building that was a community center built in the early 20th century. Several individuals were largely responsible for the rebuilding of the community center and its subsequent revival into a Portuguese Hall.

In 1934, the Los Banos DES purchased the property where the current hall stands today. Several families were involved with building the hall, most notably the Fagundes, Freitas, Parreira, Rosa and Silva families. The community celebrated its first festa there in 1937.

From the 1930s to the 60s the DES Hall was the central venue for many weddings, parties, and church bazaars, as it was the only completed community center in Los Banos for many years. The Los Banos Dairyman's Association held their meetings there until the late 1960s and wrote the minutes of the meetings in Portuguese until 1949. Free food would always be served to the community on days of celebration.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleague to join me in recognizing the Los Banos Portuguese Divino Espírito Santo in celebration of the 100th Annual Festa. This community's rich heritage, with its commitment to the ideals of their patron Queen Saint Isabel, has continued for one hundred years.

RECOGNIZING MS. CHRISTINE ZINSER AND HER EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF OUR COMMUNITY SALUTES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Christine Zinser, a constituent of the 11th Congressional District of Virginia, and to commend her for being the driving force behind Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia.

In 2011, Ms. Zinser's son Philipp was preparing to graduate from Robinson Secondary School and had made the decision to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. She approached the school to request that her son, and other seniors who had decided to enlist, be recognized during the graduation ceremony or any other end of year award event. Unfortunately, the school denied her request even though other students would be recognized for various accomplishments.

Ms. Zinser, along with another parent, Carolyn Kellam, decided to take matters into their own hands. If the school would not recognize their children, they would organize an event to do so. They contacted Braddock District Supervisor John Cook who readily agreed to allow the event to be held in his office. Ms. Zinser then contacted my office to see if she could count on my support and I enthusiastically agreed. Together we held a ceremony on June 9, 2011 in honor of the young men and women who had chosen to enlist in our Armed Forces upon graduation from Robinson Secondary School.

Following that first ceremony, Ms. Zinser doubled her efforts to include enlistees from the entire Northern Virginia region. She continued to lobby the school system, and due directly to her unwavering efforts, many schools now recognize the students who have decided to enlist, including her son's former high school. She partnered with an organization called Our Community Salutes and formed the first parent-established chapter of that organization. Ms. Zinser also assisted with establishing chapters in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

Ms. Zinser has been featured on television and in newspapers raising awareness and support for our young men and women. In February, 2012, Ms. Zinser was quoted as saying: "I really feel like these kids are a forgotten spoke in the wheel of recognizing our military families. We laud those returning from war, mourn those who have fallen, show unflinching support for the families of active duty military personnel, compassion for those who sustain injuries and immense respect for our veterans. But the young men and women who choose to serve, especially when our nation is at war, go unrecognized."

This year marks the 4th Annual Our Community Salutes ceremony during which we will honor 129 local high school students who have decided to serve our country in uniform. These students will join the 1% of our population who have enlisted, knowing that they may be putting themselves in harm's way to protect and defend our country. It is my honor to join Christine again, as I have each year, and be among the first to say to these young men and women: "Thank you."